

Mark 14:12-26 “A Supper Unlike Any Other: The Lord’s Supper”^{**1}

Main Idea: The Lord’s Supper was a supper unlike any other, filled with significance. Why so? We’re given the answer in Mark 14:12-26. The Lord’s Supper involves four key elements.

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- Make It Personal: Because Christ became the Passover Lamb...
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This morning we’ll be observing what is called “The Lord’s Supper.” Such a special privilege! What’s so significant about the Lord’s supper? We could find the answer by going several places in the Bible. The Lord’s supper appears in each of the four gospels. Our focus today will be on Mark’s account.

Scripture Reading: Mark 14:12-26 (Pastoral intern, Michael Dow, will read)

Familiarity. That word comes to mind when I think of a danger we face in church, the danger of becoming *familiar* with things that ought to amaze us. Take prayer, for instance. When we pray, the greatest Being in the universe, God Almighty, gives us His ear. But it’s so easy to take that for granted, to get too *familiar* with prayer. We battle the same in the activity of *praise*. We can begin to mouth words without meaning them.

This, too, can happen in the event known to us as “The Lord’s Supper.” We “do it” every month. We “have Communion.” But even the way we talk about it indicates the potential danger. It’s not supposed to be merely something we “do” or “have.” The Lord never intended His table to be a rote ritual.

What is the Lord’s Table, and how can we keep from slipping into autopilot when we participate in it? The truth is, the Lord’s Supper was a meal unlike any other, filled with significance for us. And what is that significance? We’ll find the answer as we explore Mark 14:12-26. The Lord’s Supper involves four key elements.

** Note: This is an unedited manuscript of a message preached at Wheelersburg Baptist Church. It is provided to prompt your continued reflection on the practical truths of the Word of God.

¹ For a previous message on this passage, see the Mark series at WBC, 10/15/06.

I. The Setting of the Lord's Supper (12-16)

Note the time indicator in verse 12. "And on the first day of Unleavened Bread, when they sacrificed the Passover lamb, his disciples said to him, 'Where will you have us go and prepare for you to eat the Passover?'"

Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread were actually two separate holy events. Passover was one of three major holidays for the Jews (in addition to the Feast of Pentecost and the Feast of Tabernacles). It occurred on 14th Nisan, that is, around April 14. The Feast of Unleavened Bread took place the seven days following Passover.

According to William Barclay, it was the ambition of every Jew to eat at least one Passover in Jerusalem in his life. Lodging was free, and since the city itself couldn't hold all the guests, the pilgrims lodged as well in the outlying villages, including Bethany and Bethpage.

To get a sense of just how big an event Passover was for the Jews, we turn to Josephus. This Jewish historian records that in AD 65, the number of lambs slain during Passover was 256,500. Since the law said there must be a minimum of ten people to one lamb, there may have been three million pilgrims in Jerusalem.² During the "off peak season," Jerusalem was home to 50,000 people.

So there's the setting. And this leads us to a couple of important realities. First...

A. Jesus observed Passover. In fact, Jesus did *everything* commanded in the Law of God. He did so, in part, because sinners had failed to do so, including us.

Passover was a huge event for the Jews, and this included Jesus. Passover was a holy day God gave His people so they would remember how He rescued them from bondage in Egypt. We read the explanation in Exodus 12:23, "When the LORD goes through the land to strike down the Egyptians, he will see the blood on the top and sides of the doorframe and will **pass over** that doorway, and he will not permit the destroyer to enter your houses and strike you down."

Jesus had observed Passover before, but none more significant than this one. Now notice our text again, verse 12 (NIV), "On the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, when it was customary to sacrifice the Passover lamb, Jesus' disciples asked him, 'Where do you want us to go and make preparations for you to eat the Passover?'"

Mark, who is writing this gospel from the perspective of Peter, doesn't give the names of the two disciples. Luke does (Luke 22:8). One was Peter, the other John.

Verses 13-16—"And he sent two of his disciples and said to them, 'Go into the city, and a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him,¹⁴ and wherever he enters, say to the master of the house, 'The Teacher says, Where is my guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?'¹⁵ And he will show you a large upper room furnished and ready; there prepare for us.'¹⁶ And the disciples set out and went to the city and found it just as he had told them, and they prepared the Passover."

This happened Thursday. Jesus and His men were outside Jerusalem, perhaps in Bethany. In response to their question, Jesus instructs Peter and John to go into Jerusalem to make preparations for the evening Passover meal, which was to be eaten between sundown and midnight.

To appreciate what happened next, we need some help in understanding first century Jewish customs and practices. I've found historian William Barclay's insights quite beneficial and will be referring to him throughout this study.

² Barclay, p. 324. And even if Josephus is using inflated numbers, there were indeed a lot of people there.

For starters, larger Jewish homes had upper rooms. Barclay explains, “Such houses looked exactly like a smaller box placed on top of a bigger box. The smaller box was the upper room, and it was approached by an outside stair, making it unnecessary to go through the main room.”³

Many feel this particular house actually belonged to the family of the author of this Gospel, John Mark.⁴ The Jews had to observe Passover within the city of Jerusalem itself, not in the outlying villages such as Bethany. This was necessary since the Passover Lamb had to be slaughtered in the temple.

“*You’ll meet a man carrying a jar of water,*” Jesus said. In the first century, women usually carried the water-pots, not men. As one commentator put it, to see a man carrying a water-pot would today be like seeing a man carrying a purse.⁵

“*Follow that man,*” Jesus said. “*He will take you to a large, furnished upper room.*”

Why all the mystery about the meeting place? What didn’t Jesus just say, “We’re going to John Mark’s house for Passover.”

I’m not sure, but let’s think about it. Who was in their midst? A traitor. Mark just mentioned in verses 10-11 that Judas was plotting to betray Jesus. If Judas had known exactly where the Supper was to be held, he might have reported this to the Priests who would have crashed the supper. But Jesus was determined to have this special time with His apostles. He would soon be betrayed, yes, but on His divine schedule, not man’s.

In verse 15 Jesus told the men to “*prepare for us* (NIV “make preparations).” What did He mean? Prepare what? He has in mind the required preparations that Jews observed before eating the Passover meal.

First, they searched the house for leaven. Every particle of leaven had to be removed because at the first Passover meal (in Exodus 12), God told the Jews to eat only *unleavened bread* (like a cracker). At the first Passover there had been no time for bread to rise, as the Jews ate in haste, ready to leave Egypt on a moment’s notice.

Next, on the afternoon before the evening Passover meal, a lamb had to be sacrificed. Peter and John would have taken their lamb to the temple, alongside literally thousands of other devout Jews with their bleating lambs. Barclay describes the scene:

“In the Temple the worshiper slew his own lamb. Between the worshipers and the altar were two long lines of priests, each with a gold or silver bowl. As the lamb’s throat was slit the blood was caught in one of these bowls, and passed up the line, until the priest at the end of the line dashed it upon the altar. The carcass was then flayed, the entrails and the fat extracted, because they were part of the necessary sacrifice, and the carcass handed back to the worshiper. If the figures of Josephus are anywhere nearly correct, and there were more than a quarter of a million lambs slain, the scene in the Temple courts and the blood-stained condition of the altar can hardly be imagined. The lamb was carried home to be roasted. It must not be boiled. Nothing must touch it, not even the sides of a pot. It had to be roasted over an open fire on a spit made of pomegranate wood.”⁶

Then after killing and roasting the lamb, Peter and John would have returned to the upper room to complete additional preparations. Once finished, here’s how the dining area looked, as described by Barclay:

³ Barclay, p. 331.

⁴ According to Acts 12:12 the early church used this house as a meeting place.

⁵ Observation by Kent Hughes, p. 154.

⁶ Barclay, pp. 332-3.

(i) There was the *lamb*, to remind them of how their houses had been protected by the badge of blood when the angel of death passed through Egypt.

(ii) There was the *unleavened bread* to remind them of the bread they had eaten in haste when they escaped from slavery.

(iii) There was a *bowl of salt water*, to remind them of the tears they had shed in Egypt and of the waters of the Red Sea through which they had miraculously passed to safety.

(iv) There was a collection of *bitter herbs*—horse radish, chicory, endive, lettuce, horehound—to remind them of the bitterness of slavery in Egypt.

(v) There was a paste called *Charosheth*, a mixture of apples, dates, pomegranates and nuts, to remind them of the clay of which they had made bricks in Egypt. Through it there were sticks of cinnamon to remind them of the straw with which the bricks had been made.

(vi) There were *four cups of wine*. The cups contained a little more than half a pint of wine, but three parts of wine were mixed with two of water. The four cups, which were drunk at different stages of the meal, were to remind them of the four promises in Exodus 6:6, 7.⁷

With these preparations completed, the meal was now ready for Jesus and the Twelve. Observing this Passover was very important to Jesus. Why? For two reasons.

1. *In so doing He looked back to a previous deliverance.* In roughly 1400 BC God redeemed His people, by His grace and for His glory. That's the way redemption works. Sinners don't save themselves. God saves sinners. And when God saves sinners, He wants them to remember how He did it.

Remember. An important word. That's what Passover was all about. Exodus 12:42 explains, "Because the LORD kept vigil that night to bring them out of Egypt, on this night all the Israelites are to keep vigil to honor the LORD for the generations to come."⁸

And so, by keeping Passover, Jesus was looking back, remembering. What's more...

2. *In so doing He looked ahead to a future deliverance.* In Luke's parallel account we read in Luke 22:15, "And he said to them, 'I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you *before I suffer.*'"

At the first Passover God rescued His people from bondage in Egypt, but they remained in another type of bondage. It's the same bondage you and I enter the world in, *bondage to sin*. What do those in bondage to sin need? Something only God can accomplish. *Deliverance from sin*.

And that's what this Passover in AD 30 is all about. God is getting ready to rescue His people, not just from bondage in Egypt, but from their bondage to sin. And how would God accomplish this feat of redemption? Through the death of another Lamb, the Lamb whose shed blood would be applied to the doorposts of the hearts of His people.

This is what makes this dinner in Mark 14 so significant. In perfect obedience to God's law, Jesus was observing Passover. But more than that...

B. Jesus was about to become the Passover Lamb. Ponder what happened that night. In the middle of the table was a lamb. And serving that lamb to His disciples was none other than *The Lamb*. As John the Baptist had announced (John 1:29), "Look, *the Lamb of God*, who takes away the sin of the world!"

⁷ Barclay, p. 333.

⁸ Kent Hughes remarks, "The Jewish commentary on that passage [Exod. 12:42] reveals that 'in that night they were redeemed and in that night they will be redeemed in the future.'" Kent Hughes, p. 155.

It all points to Him. The Host of this meal is Himself the main course. Paul put it this way in 1 Corinthians 5:7, "...For *Christ, our Passover lamb*, has been sacrificed." Peter picked up the same theme in 1 Peter 1:18-19, "For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, but *with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.*"

So in order to appreciate the Lord's Supper, we must remember, first, the setting. The setting is the Passover. Now a second element...

II. The Sadness at the Lord's Supper (17-21)

Notice verses 17-18, "And when it was evening [in Jewish reckoning 'evening' began sometime after 6:00 PM], he came with the twelve.¹⁸ And as they were reclining at table and eating..."

Stop there for a moment and note the activity. They were *eating* together. In first century Middle Eastern culture, eating together meant more than filling bellies. It signified a connection. True fellowship. That's what's happening at this Table.

A. Jesus allowed the Twelve to enjoy intimate fellowship with Him. He'd already spent three years with these men. He loved them, taught them, opened His life to them, ate countless meals with them, and none more significant than this one.

Originally the Passover meal was eaten standing (based on instructions in Exodus 12:11). By Jesus' time, however, the Jews ate it in a reclining position, as Mark records, in unhurried, intimate fellowship.

It's worth noting that in between verse 17 and verse 18, something else happened, the foot-washing described in John 13. The Lord actually took the role of a slave and cleaned up the dirty feet of these men. It was another way in which He made possible the very fellowship they were enjoying, with each other, but most importantly, with Him.

But then, in the midst of this wonderful fellowship, Jesus said something that changed the mood of the meal.

B. Jesus predicted that one of the Twelve would betray Him. Verse 18, "And as they were reclining at table and eating, Jesus said, 'Truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me, one who is eating with me.'"

It's painful when a stranger turns on you. It's painful when an enemy in your life turns on you. But nothing compares to the pain of having someone close to you, a family member or dear friend, turn on you. *One of YOU, says Jesus, will betray Me.*

Note the effect His words had on the disciples in verse 19, "They began to be sorrowful and to say to him one after another, 'Is it I?' To a man the prediction didn't make sense. The NIV puts it this way, "They were saddened, and one by one they said to him, 'Surely not I?'" And those objecting included Judas, by the way.

Verse 20, "He said to them, 'It is one of the twelve, one who is dipping bread into the dish with me.'" In his commentary, Wessel remarks, "To betray a friend after eating a meal with him was, and still is, regarded as the worst kind of treachery in the Middle East."⁹

David, in sharing what his friend Ahithophel did to him, wrote this in Psalm 41:9, "Even my close friend, whom I trusted, he who shared my bread, has lifted up his heel against me." It's worth noting that the one who betrayed David ended up hanging himself, as did the one who betrayed Jesus.

⁹ Wessel, p. 759.

No one suspected Judas. Apparently, he was highly respected by the others. He was in charge of the money for the group (John 13:29). He handled the distribution of gifts to the poor in their behalf (John 12:4-5). It seems he was seated in a place of honor at this supper, apparently at Jesus' left hand (John was at His right hand) where he could easily receive the dipped bread. Since they were reclining at the table and leaning on their left elbows, that meant Jesus' head was right next to Judas' heart.

All Jesus had to do was point at Judas and say, "He's the traitor!" I can see Peter coming instantly to Jesus' defense and pinning Judas to the floor. That's all Jesus has to do to expose the betrayal plot and save Himself from the unthinkable pain of the next eighteen hours. But He doesn't do it. He hadn't come to earth to save Himself, but to save others, and that by giving His life for them in the way the Scriptures had prophesied.

Jesus says in verse 21, "For the Son of Man goes as it is written of him [note here the emphasis on divine sovereignty; this betrayal is happening according to the very prediction of God in His Word], but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed [note here the emphasis on human responsibility; though predicted, the one doing the betraying is responsible for what he does]! It would have been better for that man if he had not been born."

Cranfield's comment is helpful, "The fact that God turns the wrath of man to his praise does not excuse the wrath of man."¹⁰

Wiersbe is right when he observes, "Judas was neither a martyr nor a robot. He was a responsible human being who made his own decisions but, in so doing, fulfilled the Word of God. He must not be made into either a hero ('After all, somebody had to betray Jesus!') or a helpless victim of merciless predestination. Judas was lost for the same reason millions are lost today: he did not repent of his sins and believe on Jesus Christ... If you have never been born again, one day you will wish you had not been born at all."¹¹

What a meal! To appreciate it, we must consider the setting of the Lord's Supper, which was the Passover. And then the sadness of the Lord's Supper, sweet fellowship marred by the announcement of betrayal. Now we're ready for the climax of this amazing supper unlike another other.

III. The Symbolic Elements in the Lord's Supper (22-25)

The words we are about to hear are ever so *familiar*, and rightfully so. To say these words are important is an understatement. All four Gospel writers record the account of what happened that Thursday evening. The apostle John devotes five chapters to the events surrounding that upper room meal. In his typical, stream-lined fashion, Mark uses only a few verses to tell us what happened in that final meal. He says that, simply put, Jesus used two symbolic elements to teach about Himself.

A. He used bread (22). "And as they were eating, he took bread, and after blessing it [NIV "gave thanks"] broke it and gave it to them, and said, 'Take; this is my body.'"

On the Passover table were three pieces of unleavened bread. The host would take the middle piece, break it, and then say, "This is the bread of affliction which our forefathers ate in the land of Egypt. Whosoever is hungry let him come and eat. Whosoever is in need let him come and keep the Passover with us."¹²

Notice that Jesus did three things with the bread.

¹⁰ Cranfield, taken from Wessel, p. 760.

¹¹ W. Wiersbe, p. 160.

¹² Barclay, p. 337.

1. *He gave thanks for it.* Some folks refer to the Lord's Supper as "the Eucharist" (which comes from a Greek word meaning 'to give thanks'). He gave a "blessing" over it, says the ESV.

2. *He broke it.* This wasn't a sliced loaf of bread, so if it was to be shared, it had to be broken. Jesus broke the unleavened bread and distributed it to those at the table.

That would not have surprised the disciples, for this is what the host always did at Passover. He offered a prayer of thanksgiving, broke bread, and passed it around to everyone. But what Jesus did next was indeed shocking, and these Jewish men had never participated in a Passover meal where the host said these words.

"Take it; this is my body." What did He say about the bread?

3. *He said it represented His body.* I inserted the word "represented," because I believe that's what Jesus is saying. Some try to take Jesus' words literally. The Roman Catholic Church teaches, for instance, the doctrine of transubstantiation, which says the bread and wine actually become the body and blood of Christ. Is that how we should understand Jesus' words?

No. Granted, as a general rule we should take the Bible literally...*unless* there is evidence in the text itself that suggests otherwise. That's exactly the case here.

When Jesus said, "This is my body," they were looking right at His physical body, and would not have concluded that the bread He was holding had become His body.

This is the important question. How did the first hearers understand those words? Here's a helpful explanation by commentator, J. D. Jones, "To understand this phrase, 'This is My body,' literally, is to forget that the words were spoken by Christ Himself to eleven men who were sitting at the table with Him. The eleven never for one moment imagined that the bread was changed into Christ's body or the wine into His blood, for there their Lord was living, breathing, talking to them. Then, to take these words literally is to forget the Eastern fondness for vivid, figurative language."¹³

This isn't the first time Jesus used such language. For instance, He had said in John 10, "I am the Door," but no one looked for hinges to appear. They knew He was speaking figuratively. As was the case when He said, "I am the Vine," (John 15:5), and, "I am the Bread of Life (John 6:35)."

It's important to remember that bread and wine were very common items in first century Israel. Nearly every meal in a Jewish home would have included them. Jesus took these common items and used them to communicate truth about Himself.

And He's doing it again in this very special meal. While they are eating, He takes some bread, blesses it, and breaks it, and gives it to them. Why? By using bread, He's teaching that He is the source of life-giving nourishment. He is the Bread of life, as He's already said. Now He takes it a step further. Take this bread, for this act of taking represents what you must do with Me. As with physical bread, if we want to benefit from the Bread of life, what must we do? We must not simply touch it, not simply look at it, but *take* it.

This is very personal. I cannot take bread for you, nor you for me. So, "Take," says Jesus to His disciples. In Matthew's account Jesus says, "Take and eat; this is my body (Matthew 26:26)." Not meaning, "This bread is my actual body," but meaning, "This bread represents my body, and once I do what I've come to do, this bread will continue to represent Me and what I've done for you, until I return for you."

¹³ J. D. Jones, p. 554.

“The bread represented his body,” says Wessel, “i.e., his abiding presence, promised to the disciples on the eve of his crucifixion; and the words become a pledge of the real presence of Jesus wherever and whenever his followers celebrate the Supper.”¹⁴

B. He used the cup (23-24). “And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, and they all drank of it. ²⁴ And he said to them, ‘This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many.’”¹⁵

I mentioned earlier that there were four cups of wine on the Jewish Passover table. By this point in the meal, the first three cups were already used. Jesus picked up the fourth cup, and once again, did three things with it.

1. *He gave thanks for it.* Who does He thank? His Father, who is also *their* Father because of their belief in Him (John 1:12).

2. *He offered it to them.* Don’t miss that there was only *one* cup, a common cup. It started in Jesus’ hands and then He gave it to the others. From that one cup many drank and benefited, but it started with Him, for He is the source of everything.

Once again, this wasn’t particularly new for the disciples. They’d drunk from the common cup at Passover many times. But they’d never seen a host do with the cup what Jesus did next.

“This is my blood of the covenant,” Jesus announced, “which is poured out for many.” Not, “This *is* my blood,” for they knew His blood was still pumping through His body. What was the significance of this cup?

3. *He said it represented His covenant-making blood.* He used an interesting phrase, “blood of the covenant”. In the Bible a “covenant” communicated an arrangement, a relationship.¹⁶ At Mount Sinai God entered into a covenant relationship with His people, the Israelites. Under that covenant, which we call the *Old Covenant*, God made it possible for sinful people to be right with Him by bringing sacrifices.

But notice the basis of this covenant, elsewhere called the *New Covenant*. It’s not based on something we give God, but on something He gave us. “This is my blood of the covenant,” Jesus said. The basis of the *New Covenant* is the blood of Jesus.

“What blood?” you ask. The blood He was about to shed in just a few hours. Jesus has in mind what He is about to accomplish on the cross. He’s about to shed that blood, meaning, He’s about to die, just like thousands of sacrificial lambs died.

And what specifically did He say about His blood? He said, “which is *poured out for many*.” The Lord seems to be using the language of the prophecy in Isaiah 53:12, “...He *poured out his life unto death*, and was numbered with the transgressors. For he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.”

We would do well to meditate on those words, “blood of the covenant.” When the Mosaic covenant was confirmed, as Exodus 24:8 declares, “Moses then took the blood, sprinkled it on the people and said, ‘This is the blood of the covenant that the LORD has made with you in accordance with all these words.’”

In order for a sinner to enter into a relationship with the Holy God, blood must be shed. Why? It’s not because God loves blood. It’s because in His mercy He has chosen to accept the death of a substitute. In Moses’ day God accepted the blood taken from sacrificed lambs, and these lambs died so that sinful people could be forgiven and live.

¹⁴ Wessel, W. W. (1984). [Mark](#). In F. E. Gaebelin (Ed.), *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Matthew, Mark, Luke* (Vol. 8, p. 760). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House.

¹⁵ NIV, “Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, and they all drank from it. ‘This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many,’ he said to them.”

¹⁶ Observation by Barclay, p. 339.

Hebrews 9:18 makes it clear, “This is why even the first covenant was not put into effect without blood.” Hebrews 9:22 states, “The law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.”

And so, for century after century the Jews cut the throats of lambs, and priests sprinkled their blood on the altar, thus opening the way for sinners to be right with God for another year. And then another year, and another slain lamb, and more blood.

Would it ever stop, this shedding of blood? Yes. It stopped on this night, at this supper, when the Final Lamb announced, “This is *my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many.*”¹⁷

Do you see what’s happening in that upper room, my friend? Jesus is fulfilling everything predicted in the Old Covenant, and He is establishing a New Covenant, as predicted by the prophets (Jer. 31:31ff.). The Old Covenant was ratified by the blood of animal sacrifices. The New Covenant likewise began when blood was shed, His own blood, in behalf of His people.

At that point...

C. He made an important prediction (25). “Truly, I say to you, I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God.” So Jesus is like those thousands of lambs that were slain, but He’s unlike them too. He makes it clear that He’s not dying as a helpless victim. He is in complete control of His death, as indicated by three predictions.

1. *He was going to die for the benefit of others.* “This is my blood which is poured out for many.” Why did He shed His blood? He said it was for the benefit of many. He died so that many could live.

This sets Christianity apart from all other religions. Most religions came into existence because of great leaders who taught people how to live. Some had great leaders who showed people how to live. Here’s what makes Christianity unique. Jesus didn’t merely tell people how to live, or show people how to live. Jesus died for people so they could live. He shed His blood so that sinners could be forgiven and live forever!

Then He gave a second prediction.

2. *He was going to live again after He died.* Notice the word “until” in verse 25. “I tell you the truth, I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until that day.” Jesus made it clear His death would not be His end. Yes, He would die in the place of His people, but He would not remain in the grave. And of course, He didn’t!

Then He made one final prediction in that upper room, by saying, “Until that day when I drink it anew in the kingdom of God.” His prediction? This will not be the last meal we have together! We will gather again, we will fellowship again, we will drink this cup again. When? In the kingdom of God.

3. *He was going to establish the kingdom of God.* He could not do that if He remained dead. But this Lamb, this King, made it clear that He had come to conquer that tragic foe of death that entered God’s world in that garden so long ago. And He will eat another meal with His followers. That day is yet future, but it is coming, the day when the risen and reigning Christ returns to earth and establishes His eternal kingdom.

Oh beloved, every time we gather at this table, we look back, but we also look ahead. As Paul explained in 1 Corinthians 11:26, “For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.”¹⁸

¹⁷ Hebrews 12:24 “...to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood...”

If you belong to Christ, you will drink with Him from the cup in that day.

IV. The Singing following the Lord's Supper (26)

Verse 26—"When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives."

The statement is so straightforward we almost miss the irony. In just a few hours Jesus will be hanging on a cross, and He knows it. Yet what is He doing here? *Singing*.

"But I don't feel like singing today!" Have you ever said those words, or thought them? My friend, singing is like every other part of the Christian life. It's not intended to be something we do merely when we *feel* like it. It's our privileged responsibility.

Did Jesus feel like singing? How could He? After leaving this room He will be sweating drops of blood as He agonizes in Gethsemane. Yet He sang.

And what did He sing? He sang what the rest of the Jews were singing as they finished their Passover meal that night, the great Hallel, Psalm 136, which begins, "Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good. *His love endures forever*. Give thanks to the God of gods. *His love endures forever*. Give thanks to the Lord of lords: *His love endures forever*." (Psalm 136 1-3)

Isn't that interesting? Just hours before His crucifixion, our Savior sang a song of thanksgiving, a song that was several hundred years old, a song right out of Scripture, a song that exalted the God whose love endures forever.

What do we learn from this? A couple of vital lessons about the purpose of singing.

A. Singing connects us with what God did in the past. That's why all of our congregational songs must be either Scripture or Scripturally sound. The Scriptures tell the story of God's redemptive work in the past. Our singing should connect us with that past, for we need constant reminders of what God said and did in the past.

B. Singing prepares us to live for God in the future. Where did Jesus go after finishing the song? Mark says, "To the Mount of Olives." What happened there? The agony of Gethsemane happened there, as did the betrayal, the arrest, and the abandonment of the disciples. Then came the trial, the scourging, and the cross. And He endured it all...with a hymn still playing in His heart.

That's why we sing, why we must sing. In His kindness, God has given us songs to sing together that are meant to prepare us to live for Him, no matter what's coming.

Make It Personal: Because Christ became the Passover Lamb...two things are true.

1. *We can be forgiven.* No matter who you are or what you've done, *you* can be forgiven. How? By repenting and putting your total trust in the Lamb of God who was slain for sinners like us.

2. *We have reason to live a life of thankfulness.* This is why we come to the Table, to remember Him and thank Him for what He has done for us.

-**Song after sermon:** #201 "Grace Greater Than Our Sin" (verses 1, 2, & 3)

-Communion

-Right Hand of Fellowship for the Howe family

-Vote on carpet proposal

¹⁸ Why will we drink then from the cup? I'm not sure the complete answer, but here's part of it. We'll drink from the cup then *to remember how we got there*, not by our merit, but by His precious blood.